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ABSTRACT

A 2-year ethnographic study of the intake process involving preschool-age Hispanic children at a school for the deaf formed the basis for this paper, which focuses on strategies that Hispanic hearing-impaired children develop in response to the sociocultural world of the classroom. The struggle for "ownership" of the child, which begins when the child starts school in the United States, is described. The paper analyzes how the interactions of "First World" institutions with "Third World" peoples are present in the local setting and form the context out of which the child's identity is shaped. The focus is on the children's participation in forming social alignments in the classroom. Interactional scenes involving three Hispanic deaf children in three different classrooms are presented, describing: the scene itself; the family and home environment; and issues of agency, power, social structuration, and ideology. The three examples are then discussed in terms of their relevance to issues of class, ethnicity, and other aspects of the family's relationship to the school as a public institution and to society in general. (JDD)

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PERSPECTIVES ON IDENTITY: THE HISPANIC DEAF CHILD'S INITIATION INTO FORMAL SCHOOLING

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PERSPECTIVES ON IDENTITY: THE HISPANIC DEAF CHILD'S INITIATION INTO FORMAL SCHOOLING

When a Hispanic deaf child first starts school in the U.S., a struggle for "ownership" of the child begins. This struggle has implications for the development of that child's skills, knowledge and social identity. Schools for deaf children, whose student population comes increasingly from low income minority groups, have their own agendas which have evolved out of a long history of serving rather different populations of students in the past. The sociocultural systems of the Hispanic child's family and community have in most cases evolved historically in opposition to the sociocultural systems represented by the schools. Interaction between these systems can result in conflict, misunderstanding, and confusion on both sides.

This paper--based on a two-year ethnographic study--focuses directly on strategies young (ages 3-6) deaf Hispanic children develop in response to the sociocultural world of the classroom. The analysis will show how the interactions of "First World" institutions with "Third World" peoples is immediately present in the local setting, and forms the context out of which the child's identity is shaped. Questions will be raised regarding the adequacy of traditional concepts of social analysis--"ethnicity," "culture," "class," "language," and "disability"--to understanding local interactional systems, their influence on the child's developing identity, and their connection to larger, more global forces.

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Adrian T. Bennett

Introduction

When a Hispanic deaf child first starts school in the U.S., a struggle for "ownership" of the child begins. This struggle has implications for the development of that child's communicative and cognitive skills, the accumulation of knowledge, and the formation of a social identity. Schools for deaf children, whose student population comes increasingly from low income minority groups, have their own agendas which have evolved out of a long history of serving rather different populations of students in the past. The sociocultural systems of Hispanic children's families and communities have in most cases evolved historically in separation from, and even opposition to, the sociocultural systems represented by the schools. Interaction between these systems can result in misunderstanding, confusion and conflict.

Because of the legislative and bureaucratic framework which is built into the special education system, its institutions provide interesting sites for the study of a number of social and educational issues. Our project was particularly interested in addressing issues involving the interaction of members of Hispanic communities with public institutions, in this case with public schooling.

Our ethnographic study was concerned with a small piece of the more general relationship of subordination which forms an

essential part of the context in which Hispanic communities find themselves in the United States. Our assumption is that any understanding of this relationship must come to terms with the social processes of daily life in which that relationship is produced and sustained. With this in mind, we focused our attention on two interrelated aspects of the intake process: the children's response to their initiation into formal schooling, and the interaction between these children's families and special education institutions. In this paper, I focus on the first of these concerns, i.e., on strategies young (ages 3-6) deaf Hispanic children develop in response to the sociocultural world of the classroom.

The analysis, which is currently very much in process, will explore ways of understanding how the interaction between "Third World" peoples and "First World" institutions is immediately present in the local school setting, and forms the context out of which the child's identity is shaped. The focus here will be on the children's participation in forming social alignments in the classrooms, including some discussion of strategies they developed to cope with social and ideological structures within those classrooms.

An Ethnography of the Intake Process in Special Education Settings

The discussion is based on a two-year ethnographic study (1984-86) of the "intake process" of preschool-age Hispanic deaf children. The intake process is governed by federal (eg., PL 94-142) and state (in New York State, Part 200 of the Regulations of

the Commissioner of Education) laws. These laws specify that all handicapped children have a right to a formal public education. The laws provide a regulatory framework for assessment, educational programming, decision-making, legal redress, parent involvement, and other matters affecting the handicapped.

Our ethnographic study followed the families of nine Hispanic deaf children, ages 3-6, through the intake process in a "private" school for the deaf, which I shall call "Concordia," in the metropolitan area of New York City. We also followed a smaller sample through the first part of this process in the New York City public school system.

The families represented only some of the extensive variety of Hispanics living in the New York area. Some were Puerto Rican, born either in Puerto Rico or the U.S. mainland. Some were from Central and South America, and some were Dominican. They varied to some extent in class terms, with one very middle class Uruguayan/American family, the father of which was a self-employed businessman and university graduate. The mother of another child was a Dominican whose father had been a career diplomat. But the rest of our families were either working class or had a very marginal relationship to the labor market.

Figures 1 and 2 provide immigration history, job status, education, and other information on the families. I refer to them as "Third World people" to emphasize their status as--with the one or two exceptions already mentioned--an oppressed class of people with close familial, cultural and other social ties to countries whose economies are largely controlled by U.S.

interests. They were also members of communities with a very "disadvantaged" position in a metropolitan center in the U.S., as indicated by several recently released reports which document high poverty levels and unemployment rates. Of those lucky enough to find employment, they usually hold jobs in the low skilled, highly unstable "service" sector where low wages, lack of benefits, and job insecurity are the norm (GACHA 1985; APRED 1985; Stafford 1985). These reports document the general and increasing deprivation of educational, health and social services which in earlier decades helped to compensate for the disadvantages of inner city life and membership in certain ethnic minority or poor white groups (ASPIRA 1983; Grossman 1984). Finally, some recent reports have documented that, in New York City, conditions for these groups are becoming worse (Tobier 1984). Although I cannot discuss in detail here the implications of these facts about the social, political and economic status of Hispanic communities in New York, it is worth keeping in mind in the following discussion, as it formed an important background to our data collection and analysis.

[place Figs. 1 and 2 about here]

In New York State, the intake process in special education includes several institutionalized steps purportedly designed to implement federal and state regulations. These steps involve a series of formalized interactions in which the child is assessed, and recommendations for placement and programming are made by testing specialists, supervisors and teachers. A formal document--the Individualized Educational Program, or IEP--is

produced, meetings between parents and staff are held to discuss all this, and the parent is asked to sign the final version of the document (v. Fig. 3). The IEP has a quasi-contractual status under the law. If a parent refuses to sign the IEP, he/she has a right to a due process procedure in which the merits of the case will be heard by a duly appointed judge.

[place Fig. 3 about here]

Figure 3 provides some indication of data collection methods at each stage of the intake process. These included participant observation, tape recording, review of written documents, and informal interviewing of key participants. Our methodological and analytic framework derives partially from work in the sociolinguistics of interpersonal communication (Gumperz 1982a, 1982b), the ethnography of communication (Hymes 1974; Bauman and Sherzer 1974), and the microethnography of classroom interaction (Erickson 1979; Green and Wallat 1981). This work provided us with a systematic methodological framework for describing communicative events and for teasing out the "rules" involved in conveying specific communicative intents and "negotiating" what Gumperz (1982a) calls the "situated meanings" of interpersonal interaction. It thus provides a basis for describing the communicative and cultural systems it is presumed people must share in order to participate appropriately in what Wittgenstein (1958) labeled the "language games" of everyday life.

At the same time, this approach to social analysis, which I will label the "sociolinguistics of discourse," brings with it certain limitations which we knew from the outset would have to

be overcome. Various critics have noted these limitations. One major critique, made by a number of critics (Ogbu 1981; McDermott and Gospodinoff 1981; Bennett 1981, 1985), is that this tradition overemphasizes "local" or "micro" levels of interaction to the neglect of those larger social forces--political and economic, as well as social and cultural--which everyone agrees are necessarily related to the "local." A related weakness is the inability, or perhaps unwillingness, to look at dimensions of power, including domination of one group by another, as well as resistance to domination (Giroux 1983; Sola and Bennett 1985).

An even more fundamental critique would be to question the concept of culture prevalent in work produced in the sociolinguistics of discourse tradition. This is the notion that "culture" consists of shared systems of belief, knowledge, communicative habits, which can be adequately described as autonomous "traditions," etc. It is a notion that has come increasingly under attack in the anthropological literature (e.g., Wolf 1982; Comaroff 1985; Marcus and Fischer 1985). The problem with this notion, which admittedly has a certain aura of commonsense about it, is that it fails to account for the maintenance of unequal social systems over extended periods of time, a prominent feature of complex human social systems. In their empiricist emphasis on discovering patterns of coocurrence and recurrence, sociolinguists of discourse provide no entrance to the analysis of the dimensions of power and conflict which are an integral feature of complex social systems in the contemporary world. The "culture as collectively-shared patterns" model also

tends to reduce group members to the status of automatons who simply adopt and carry on the ways of the preceding generation, unless forced to do otherwise. Quite lacking in this version of cultural analysis is any concept of human agency, of human beings acting on their environment, or on themselves, to change it or adapt to it

A somewhat different approach to the study of culture and communication problematizes the notion of culture as shared patterns and emphasizes instead a concept of culture as a constant process in which social groups develop responses to the social, i eational, and material conditions in which they find themselves at a particular historical moment. Scholars who take this view see the social world as "the constant construction and reconstruction of groups, boundaries and relations' (Connell 1983). It views culture as a process in which

> groups are known to exploit the ambiguities of inherited forms, to impart new evaluations or valences to them, to borrow forms more expressive of their interests, or to create wholly new forms to answer to changed circumstances (Wolf 1982, 387).

In the same vein, I favor an approach to discourse that understands that language, in Bakhtin's (1981) words,

> is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated--overpopulated--with the intentions of others. Expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one's own intentions and accents, is a difficult and complicated process (Bakhtin 1981, 294).

Those who work in the sociolinguistics of discourse tradition have, for the most part, focussed on describing the minute particulars of participants' knowledge and use of "appropriate" communicative patterns and rules, which serves as a

foundation for engaging each other in sustained interaction and agreeing on mutually-constructed understandings of each other's communicative intent. This collection of patterns and rules has been aptly referred to in the literature as "participant structures" (Philips 1975).

Bakhtin, on the other hand, argued for a view of discoures as a "struggle of voices," i.e.,

> an intense struggle within us for hegemony among various available verbal and ideological points of view, approaches, directions and values (Bakhtin 1981, p. 346).

In this view, to limit our analysis of human interaction to the description of recurrent surface and underlying patterns is to ignore what social process is all about, i.e., a struggle for meaning, truth, social position, material resources, and power.

Language in use takes on a rather different coloring from this perspective. Bakhtin felt that

> it is possible to give a concrete and detailed analysis of any utterance as a contradiction-ridden, tension-filled unity of two embattled tencencies in the life of language (Bakhtin 1981, p. 272).

These "tendencies" are social and ideological at the same time, involving human beings in a struggle both to differentiate themselves from each other, and to enlist solidarity and mutual support, to engage in conflict on the one hand, and to form communities on the other. Rather than trying to describe "participant structures," then, we might try to characterize instead "participant struggles."

Therefore, in looking at some examples of classroom interaction, our primary concern will be with the possibility of

understanding children's communicative practices as part of a process of responding to contradictions within the everyday discourse of the classroom. Each of three examples we will present will involve a piece of interaction in the early classroom experience of a young Hispanic deaf child who has just been admitted into Concordia. Our focus will be on the social alignments and the complexes of intentions that take shape and directionality in the life-world of the classroom. We will try to understand these communicative practices as central to a twofold process of children simultaneously responding to and constructing specific social arrangemens which are at every moment informed with an ideological configuration. It is through this interplay of utilization of resources and action upon the social setting that these relations are imbued by participants with particular meanings (Giddens 1985).

This view becomes very apt when applied to the specific relations of the Hispanic deaf child in school settings, as well as to the more general relations between Hispanic communities and public institutions. Deafness, as well as other "characteristics" of persons, such as "ethnicity," "class," and "gender," can then be understood as resources and constraints whose symbolic power is both constructed and utilized by participants in local situations to set into place, as it were, certain social arrangements, certain ideological configurations, certain allocations of resources and rewards, of thinking, and of being.

It is in this theoretical context that we will want to examine the social forces that are defining the child's identity, and the role various participants, communities, and institutions--including particularly the child--play in shaping the emergent consciousness of the child and his/her social relationships in the school setting. Our ultimate concern is with making explicit some of the social and ideological forces that are shaping specific possibilities for that child's social relationships and awareness.

We believe that an understanding of these processes is essential to developing adequate social systems for the education of Hispanic deaf children, and that such an understanding will have implications for developing such systems for the Hispanic communities generally. Policy and implementation of policy for developing such "social systems," must integrate several levels of action with several levels of analysis or investigation. This is particularly obvious in the field of special education, as it is closely governed by federal and state law, as well as local regulations, and is closely monitored--at least in certain aspects--by state officials. Thus, we need to understand to what degree public policy, law, curriculum, pedagogy, school organization, classroom settings, and the training of teachers and other educational professionals constitute an integrated system. The discontinuities as well as continuities of this system need to be empirically investigated.

In this context, this paper is intended to serve two needs: (1) to explore ways of analyzing parts of this system in terms of

their integration into the system as a whole; (2) to carry out this exploration by focussing on the emergent social processes by means of which Hispanic deaf children are socially and ideologically positioned within the institutional context of formal education systems.

Three Case Studies

In this section of the paper we describe interactional scenes involving three Hispanic deaf children in three different classrooms. In each case, we first present a description of an interactional scene, followed by a description of the family and home environment, and concluding with a discussion of participants, as well as own, interpretations, raising thereby certain questions of agency, power, social structuration, and ideology. Our immediate concern in each interaction will be with such questions as the following:

--What are the power relations in the discourse?

--What communicative and symbolic resources do participants draw upon in constructing particular social alignments?

--What are the pertinent social and ideological contextual features to which the construction of these particular social arrangements may be responding?

--What contradictions within the discourse and its contexts are manifested through participants' communicative practices?

After the three examples have been presented, we will then discuss them in terms of their relevance to issues of class, ethnicity, and other aspects of the family's relationship to the school as a public institution and to U.S. society in general. We conclude the paper with a brief discussion of the implications

of our theoretical and methodological perspective and some suggestions for extending it and overcoming certain limitations.

A Note about the School

There is an explicit goal throughout Concordia of fostering the development of "independence," "autonomy," "self-management" on the part of the students, and the preschool is no exception. The preschool teachers agree that part of their task is to socialize the children into certain patterns of behavior, such as sitting in a group directed by the teacher without becoming distracted or interfering with the progress of the lesson. The justification for this effort is to prepare the children for the acquisition of specific skills as they approach the primary grades, particularly literacy and math skills. Aside from this concern with "appropriate behavior," the preschool curriculum is centered on the development of prereading and premath skills. These various priorities are rationally reflected in the categories which structure the Phase-2 IEP in which separate pages are devoted to assessment, statement of goals and objectives as related to such topics as: "receptive and expressive language"; "prereading skills"; "premath skills"; and the social skills of "Controlling One's Own Behavior," "Relations with Others," and "Task Orientation."

First Example: 'Benito Escobar'

(1) Benito in the Classroom

Six children are seated around a couple of tables arranged in a circle (v. Figure 4). They are having lunch. Each has brought a highly colorful lunchbox and plastic thermos bottle

decorated with the cartoon figures of TV or comic strip. All the children at the table are about four years old. The classroom is one of eight in the preschool, whose students range in age from three to six years, and who are roughly grouped by age and "ability" into different classrooms.

[place Figure 4 about here]

Like all the rooms in the preschool, this room is brightly, flourescently lit, and the walls are decorated with things the children have made, such as paper pieplates with faces drawn on them and cotton balls stuck to them to represent lambs, or little "birthday cakes" cut out of colored construction paper and decorated with candles of the same material. Each cake has one of a child's name and birthdate written on it in felt tip pen, as well as a photograph of the child. Materials on display like this have particular importance for the children, as can be seen from strong reactions of children when one of the photos is missing, or a teacher forgets to place a child's work on the board with the others.

There are as usual two teachers in the room, one a head teacher, the other an instructional assistant. Today, however, the regular head teacher is absent, and a substitute is present. There is also an adult volunteer to help out today. All three are women, as are all the teachers in this preschool.

Lunchtime is not breaktime for the teachers. They consider lunch an opportunity to teach a variety of "social" skills, and to improve the children's oral language skills as well, for this

classroom is a program for the oral training of the deaf--one of the few left in the U.S.

One teacher usually always sits with the children during lunch, encouraging the use of speech and managing the children's interactions, or helping them to manage their own interactions. At the lunch table, Sara, a deaf child of deaf parents, shows her sandwich to Maria, who lives in Washington Heights with her Dominican parents. Sara opens her sandwich so Maria can see what's inside.

Benito has been in the classroom about four weeks. He too is Dominican and lives in Washington Heights, not far from Maria's family. Benito leans forward over the table to try to see Sara's sandwich, but Sara says "No," and gestures him to keep back. She leans towards Anthony on the other side of the table next to Benito, and shows Anthony her sandwich. Then she sits back and moves her hand in circles, smiling and looking at each child in the circle, as if to indicate they are all here together. This is a recurrent communicative exchange in the preschool, and is interpreted by the teachers as an expression of harmony and social solidarity; i.e., as an expression of social values they explicitly try to inculcate in the children.

But then Sara makes a kind of "shooing" gesture toward Benito. This consists of extending an arm with the hand downward and sharply raising hand and forearm toward the "recipient." The gesture closely resembles the ASL sign GET AWAY. It is punctuated with a frown. The preschool teachers will frequently reprimand the child who performs this gesture, saying "No, that's

not nice. We're all equal here, everyone's the same, you don't exclude anyone." There are clear indications too that the children also define this gesture as an insult, and will often react strongly to it. Some will cry or whimper; some will point it out to the teacher; some will return the gesture; some will try to ignore it by turning their attention elsewhere.

After Sara makes the exclusion gesture toward Benito, she turns to Maria and says "Good," pointing at Maria's lunch and at Maria, and also forming the ASL sign GOOD at the same time. Sara then goes from child to child, following the same routine, telling each in the same way that his or her lunch is good. But she skips Sammy and Benito. For Benito, instead she makes the same frowning and disgusted look, and gives him the GET-AWAY SIGN again. A sad, or perhaps hurt, expression crosses Benito's face. Then he frowns. He tries to get the attention of the other children, gesturing toward some of them, tapping some of them on the arm. But he has little success. Those who do turn to him, turn back immediately toward Sara.

A moment later, Sara pats Sammy on the arm, indicating by a circular sweep of her arm that now he is part of her group too. Again, she excludes Benito with the same facial and gestural language she had used before. But this time Benito does the same thing. He points to each child in turn, making an inclusive sweeping circle with his arm. And he excludes Sara with quite the same gesture and facial expression she had used on him. For some reason he also excludes Anthony.

By this time Benito has finished his lunch. He takes his dessert from the large bowl in the center of the table which is used to hold the children's desserts while they eat their main courses. Today Benito has brought a roll of assorted lifesavers. He picks the roll up and looks at Maria. She holds out her hand, palm up, and he gives her one. The substitute teacher reminds the children they have to finish their lunches before eating dessert, and so Maria must wait. Benito points to Anthony, Maria aNd himself, making a sweeping, circular motion with his arm, looking at Sara as he does so, but not including her in the circumference of the gesture. Then he gives Anthony a lifesaver. Anthony tries to hide it under his hand, glancing furtively at the substitute teacher, for he has not finished his sandwich. She sees this, and says to him, "You can't have dessert yet. You have to finish your lunch first. By this time the expression has changed on Benito's face: he is smiling.

Tina also wants one of Benito's candies. She reaches her hand out to him and he gives her one. Then he opens his mouth to show the substitute teacher the lifesaver he has on his tongue. Sara calls to Benito, "Benito, Benito," but he does not respond or even look at her. Sara then gets up and comes around the table to Benito and looks at his mouth, gesturing to him to open it. He does so, revealing the lifesaver. She looks, then returns to her seat. Then Sara takes her own dessert from the bowl, individually wrapped hard candies. She gives one to Maria. Tina and Anthony ask her for one, but she says, "No more," meaning she has run out. However, Tina looks in the bowl and

finds one buried under a package of Hostess' cupcakes. Benito gives Sammy his pack of lifesavers, indicating through gestures that he should choose one. But the substitute teacher reminds Sammy he must finish his lunch first.

(2) Benito's Family and Home Environment

Benito lives in a community of about 80,000 Dominicans in Washington Heights on the upper West Side of Manhattan. His father has been living there since he came to the U.S. with his family at about the age of ten. He speaks both Spanish and English fluently, though his dialect in either language is very much the vernacular "street language" of the New York Hispanic community. He is a former professional baseball player who never made the big leagues. He was not regularly employed at the time of our research, though he reported that sometimes he worked in the bodega ("grocery store") across the street from their apartment. There is a strong baseball tradition in his family, with both his father and younger brother also playing as professionals. Benito's father is well-known in the neighborhood, and participates actively in a network of adult males, "hanging out" with them at the bodega, or visiting them in their homes to watch a sports event on TV.

Benito's mother had been in the U.S. for only four years, having met Mr. Escobar in the Dominican Republic. She came from a rural area near the Haitian border. She spoke no English, except for a few formulaic phrases.

In some ways, life in the Escobar home retained some typical Latin rural features. Members of the husband's family--his

mother and sister in particular--as well as a godmother (comadre) who was not a blood relative, and other friends come in and out of the home in a relatively free manner and treat the apartment as if it were their own home. The family is well-known in the neighborhood, as is Benito. For example, the men in the bodega frequently give Benito small presents of toys which can be purchased at there.

Benito is allowed to go down to the street to play without direct supervision by his parents, although they will look out of the window from time to time to see how he is doing. At four years old he is, at least according to his father's reports, quite able to take care of himself. If some other child tries to interfere with him, for example trying to take his tricycle away, he stands up to them, no matter how big they are, using physical force if necessary.

Benito's parents reported that they are not concerned about Benito's future in terms of job security or career. The most important thing, they said, was that he grow up to be buena gente ("good people"), and get along with other people and be well liked by them. They hoped he would get along in school and achieve at more or less the same level as his peers. They were not concerned that he excel academically, though his father hoped he would do well in sports.

(3) Interpretive Comment: Benito

Benito's teachers had a very different view of him than his parents, particularly his father. During the IEP parent/teacher conference, the teacher introduced the page on "Controlling One's

Own Behavior" by noting that Benito did not rely on adults to support him in peer conflict situations: "He takes care of it himself, which is good." But, she noted, he needs to get beyond the level of merely using physical force. If a child tries to take a toy car away from him, for example, he "may grab the car back or push the other child." She noted that "we are trying to get him to that next level," where he can "negotiate with the child."

Benito's father, on the other hand, emphasizes Benito's willingness to stand up for himself, as the following exchange in the IEP conference shows (R = Hispanic Resource Specialist):

> F: A la grande le da (He gives it to the big one) [i.e., to B's older sister who is eight years old] He'll fight, he don't care.
>
> T: He doesn't do that here.
>
> F: This is. . everybody know him there (heheheh), he fights.
>
> R: [to T]: Yes he does, he does do that, he fights with everybody and he
>
> T: I said he doesn't do that in the room
>
> R: [to parents]: Oh, aqui no pelea (R: Oh, here he doesn't fight)
>
> F: He don't do that here?
>
> T: No.
>
> R: No.
>
> F: He boxes!
>
> T: No, no.
>
> R: No, el eh (R: No, he uh)
>
> M: [To F]: You hehheh, tu que le enseñas despues viene y que. .
> (M: You teach him then he comes and. .)

F: He boxes!

T: No, the most he'll do is he may grab the toy, he might go like this, but he doesn't knock the kid down or anything, no.

F: Cuz in my neighborhood, in my neighborhood. . .

In the lunch exchange, Benito is clearly (not only from the analyst's point of view, but from that of the teachers as well) in a contest with Sara. Sara initiates, as she often does in this classroom, a game of inclusion and exclusion. But Benito holds his own in that he resorts to a strategy which momentarily aligns most of the group with him, as he distributes candy, and excludes Sara. Sara counters with a similar strategy, offering candy to Maria, but she quickly runs out of material resources.

Rather than acting "physical," as the teacher, and perhaps his father, would expect, he searches for, and eventually finds, a strategy in which he manipulates symbols--the assorted lifesavers--to respond to Sara's exclusion. His first strategy, gesturing in an inclusive circle to include all the children except Sara, was not effective: the children themselves did not respond. He then uses a strategy involving the manipulation of a valued item--the assorted lifesavers--which does in fact change the social alignment of the group, placing him as momentary focal point, and excluding Sara. Sara is then put in the position of having to include herself, which she does by walking around the table and getting Benito to show her the lifesaver in his mouth. However, she has still not been included in "his" group, as he does not offer her a lifesaver.

Second Example: 'Ana Colon'

(1) Ana in the Classroom.

The second example takes place in a kindergarten classroom in the same preschool. In this classroom, one of the recurrent activities is fantasy play. The teacher generally sets a basic "theme" for the children by constructing out of available materials a make-believe setting within which the children can improvise their own play and interaction. The children are free to initiate, to create and to control their local environment during this time. In the scene below, the teacher partitioned off one area of the classroom by pulling sets of shelves and other partitions together to form a "bathroom," complete with a cardboard door made from a large box which could be opened and closed. Inside the partitioned area she placed various objects that could count as the typical artifacts of the modern American bathroom, including a toilet, a vanity chest, towels, and real makeup.

While Ana, a six-year-old of Puerto Rican background, is making herself up at the vanity chest, the teacher adds a mirror to the setting. Three or four children are lined up outside the cardboard door, waiting their turn in the bathroom. They knock loudly on the door, and, encouraged by the teacher, tell Ana to "hurry up." Ana puts lipstick on and rubs two circles of bright red rouge on each cheek, much the way a circus clown might do it. Finally she comes out of the bathroom, to be replaced by Estelle, who also starts to make herself up. When Diana, the teacher, sees Ana, she calls to her: "Ana, well look at you." Ana doesn't seem to have heard, and so Diana calls her name, "Ana Colon, Ana

Colon." Ana then looks at Diana, who says, "Ana Colon, come here a minute and look at yourself. Come look at yourself in the mirror. She guides Ana over to a full-length mirror outside the "bathroom," and says, "Look at your face, you've got bright red spots there. You look like an Indian." Ana looks at herself in the mirror, then up at Diana, watching her gestures as well as trying to catch the words. Diana says, "You're supposed to blend it in. Blend it in," she tells her, while showing her how to rub the rouge into her cheeks to make the color blend more gradually into her light brown complexion. "That's right, it's just supposed to be like a blush," Diana says. "Blush," says Ana, rubbing her cheeks and watching herself in the mirror, glacning now and then up at Diana and saying again, "Blush." (v. Figure 5).

A moment later, when Ana sees Estelle come out of the "bathroom" with the same bright spots on her cheeks, she points to her and jumps excitedly up and down, laughing loudly and pointing at Estelle, then glancing at Diana. "That's right," Diana says, "tell Estelle to blend it in." Then Ana rubs her hand in a circular motion on her cheek and says to Estelle, "Blush." Looking into the "bathroom" a moment later, she sees Gina putting thick blotches of rouge on her cheeks and goes through a similar excited performance, again calling Diana's attention to this, rubbing her cheek and saying "blush" to Gina.

(2) Ana's Family and Home Environment

Ana lived with her mother, father, and baby sister in a city housing project on Manhattan's midtown West Side. These projects

consist of several buildings about twenty stories high inhabited by low-income families. The Colon's two-bedroom apartment was well furnished, including two TVs and a VCR. The children's bedroom was well-stocked with children's books.

Mrs. Colon was trained as a teacher in Puerto Rico, and certified to teach in New York State. However, she was not working at the time, since, as she reported, she wanted to be able to devote full time to preparing Ana for school, and seeing to it that she did well once she started. This involved her in a number of activities with Ana, including watching TV programs with her so she could talk to her about them, reading storybooks with her, as well as directly teaching her numbers and the alphabet through the use of large charts she had constructed.

Ana's father had a steady job as a hotel worker in a large exclusive hotel in midtown Manhattan. In some ways, particularly income and the father's occupation, this was a typical modern working-class family. In other ways, especially their apparent aspirations for achieving material security, this was a middle class family. Unlike Benito's family, the Colon family lived largely as a self-contained nuclear unit, although they did regularly visit the mother's family in Puerto Rico.

Ana's mother was very concerned that Ana learn to speak, read and write English. On our first visit to their home, Mrs. Colon talked a good deal about Ana's oral abilities. Prior to her application for Ana's enrollment at Concordia, Mrs. Colon had placed her in three consecutive preschool programs, beginning with Head Start. The program she was currently enrolled in was

part of a privately-funded service center for the hearing impaired whose policy was to stress mainstreaming. In accordance with this emphasis, oralism and English were the foundation of the preschool and parent program, and staff encouraged non-English-speaking mothers to learn English and to use English as much as possible with their hearing impaired child. For this purpose they strongly recommended these parents to enroll in an English class offered at the center (Benito's mother, in fact, had been involved in such a program there).

Mrs. Colon told us that Ana was very oral. She said that just the evening before Ana could not stop talking about a monster movie they had watched together on the VCR. Her mother coached Ana to tell my assistant about the movie, while her father repeated sotto voce, "Talk to the teacher, talk to the teacher." When Ana uttered a few words, my assistant said, "Habla claro quando quiere" ("She speaks clear when she wants"). Mrs. Colon answered,

> M: Yes, yes she talks clear when she wants. And when she doesn't know anything, she tries to draw what she wants. She's very consistent, like uh. . .'Mommy, you have to understand me,' you know?

We believe Mrs. Colon very much wanted Ana to enter Concordia's program--which had been recommended to her as the next best thing to mainstreaming. Our visit came after Ana's evaluation and before the case conference with the assessment team regarding the Phase-1 IEP and Ana's possible placement at Concordia. Mrs. Colon did not yet know the results of the assessment or whether Ana would be approved for admission. To her we represented the school, even though we explained as best

we could that we did not represent the school, that we were only doing research. she continually emphasized Ana's readiness for kindergarten at Concordia: her oral skills, her books and related prereading skills, her strong wish to communicate, her ability to distinguish squares, triangles and circles. She brought out large cardboard charts she had fashioned displaying numbers to 100 and the alphabet. She showed us how she used these to train Ana, and asked Ana to demonstrate her knowledge.

The only odd thing, I felt (and Ana's teacher, Diana, came to agree), was that the parents attempted to use only English with Ana. Yet they spoke both Spanish and English to each other, and to Valerie, Ana's baby sister, who at two years old was already becoming bilingual. Mrs. Colon reported in fact that Ana would sometimes get frustrated when she heard Spanish spoken at home, and would demand to know what was being said. Only that morning she had insisted on knowing what agua ("water") meant when Valerie had asked her mother for "agua." Several staff members at Concordia advised her to use Spanish with Ana at home, including Diana, but even after Ana had been several months in the program, her mother still expressed doubts. Staff at the previous preschool had told her definitely not to mix the two languages together, and that Ana could learn Spanish later perhaps, once she had established a good foundation in the more important language.

(3) Interpretive Comment: Ana

Again, in the classroom scene involving Ana there is a clear concern with social alignments, though in this case it is not

immediately a question of two children competing for "ownership" of the group of peers, but rather of one child aligning herself with respect to the teacher and two other children. Ana is taught a piece of social behavior. When she sees Estelle, Ana both literally (v. Fig. 2) and figuratively places herself between Diana the teacher and Estelle, her peer. She does so by transmitting the same knowledge to Estelle that Diana had transmitted to her a moment earlier. Her style of doing so, however, is rather different than Diana's, since she uses much more in the way of nonverbal communicative means--jumping up and down, pointing, laughing--to get her message across. But the message involves in both cases--i.e. Diana/Ana and Ana/Estelle--the implication of a differential social status. In the teacher's case, her status and authority are already established, at least as far as Ana is concerned. In the case of the peers, of course, authority has to be established through social and communicative action. In the course of establishing her authority, however, Ana has stamped it with the legitimacy of the "official" or "authoritative" (i.e., teacher-controlled) discourse of the classroom itself. In so doing, she has, at least for the moment, aligned herself with that discourse.

Third Example: Carlos Soto

(1) Carlos in the Classroom.

It is snacktime in the 3-year-olds classroom. The whole class is sitting around the circular table with the two teachers, Eileen and Sally (Figure 6). To Carlos' right is an adult volunteer, followed by Bhinta, Jason, Nathan, then Charlene--a

student teacher--then Carlota, who is just to Carlos' left. Sally is sitting directly behind Carlos, and Eileen is behind Jason (v. figure 6).

Eileen is telling me that Carlos has a lot of anger, that he's been taking it out through aggression on Bhinta, a small girl of an East Indian immigrant family. Eileen is trying to calm Jason and Nathan, two Black boys who spend a lot of time in rough play that ranges from goodnatured play pretending to be two karate stars to out and out trying to strangle one another.

Charlene is drawing faces--"happy" or "sad"--with a felt-tip pen on small disposable plastic cups. First she asks each child if he/she wants milk. If the answer is yes, she draws a small circle to represent a head, then asks whether the child wants eyes, a nose and mouth drawn on the face.

This little piece of curriculum has many expressed purposes, which cannot be discussed in detail here. One point is to elicit verbalizations--"yes/no," "milk," "I want milk," "eyes," "nose," "mouth," "face," as well as "please" and "thank you." Another goal is to get the child used to working within a group, cooperatively, under the direction of the teachers. It is hoped that their visual awareness will be sharpened, as they become familiar with representations, such as the faces on the cup (there are many other instances of visual representation in the curriculum and the classroom itself). It is also hoped they will acquire some "pre-math" skills, such as the ability to recognize squares, triangles and circles. After drawing the faces, Charlene writes the child's name on the cup. She will also ask

what they want to eat. On various days there will be different selections of fruit and some kind of sweet or cookie.

When she gets to Carlos and asks if he wants milk, he doesn't answer, though he does look up at her. But when she draws the circle for the face he volunteers "eyes." However, he does not go on to say "nose" or "mouth." She gives him a cup of milk, but he doesn't drink. Sally gives him pieces of apple, after peeling each. She doesn't notice Carlos putting the peel in his mouth, then spitting it out and putting it in his milk. She's trying to get a response from Carlota whether she feels sick (she's had diarrhea, Sally tells me). Then she notices what Carlos is doing and says, "No, don't do that," but not in a loud or harsh manner.

A minute later Carlos pours the milk out onto the table. Sally takes him to the towel dispenser nearby and makes him clean up, though at first he merely throws the paper towels on the puddle of milk. She has to guide his hand with the paper towel in it, directing him with many commands.

Once it is cleaned up, she gives him more milk, but soon it is accidentally spilled. Eileen stands, says to Carlos, "That was an accident, that's okay. But before you poured the milk out. That's bad. We don't do that. But this time it was an accident. That's okay."

Soon after this he turns toward Bhinta on his right and pours milk on her head. Bhinta isn't very happy about this, but she doesn't cry either. She just puts her hands on top of her head and looks very sad. Sally remonstrates with Carlos, tells

him that's bad. "You poured milk on Bhinta's head. That makes Bhinta sad." Sally sounds more sad herself than angry. "Tell Carlos you're angry, Bhinta," Eileen says, "you don't like that." But Bhinta just stares in turn at Eileen, me, Carlos and Sally.

A few minutes later they begin cleaning up. Carlos goes to the bathroom at the other end of the room and throws something in the toilet. Jason trails behind watching him. The others are cleaning up around the table. Carlos comes back and says, "Apple," to Sally, pointing to the few remaining pieces of apple on the table. Sally says, "No more, no apple, we're finished now." She goes out with the half-empty milk carton and apple back to the kitchen across the hall. Carlos goes with her. When they come back, Sally says he tried to dump milk on Sara's head (from Benito's classroom), but she just managed to prevent him. Eileen says, "~Lucky for him, Sara would have decked him."

The teachers are at the far end (from the snack table) of the room, preparing the children to go outside when Carlota's parents appear and say they will take her home, since the supervisor had called them to tell them Carlota is ill.

Carlos is standing near Bhinta at the opposite end of the room. While the teachers are occupied, he picks up a sizable wooden block which is shaped like an arch and strikes Bhinta hard on the head, hitting her with one of the "legs" of the arch on the top-right-hand side of her head.

Eileen comes running and takes Carlos aside, while Sally attends to Bhinta. Eileen talks to Carlos, saying she knows he's angry, but he shouldn't hit others. He hurt Bhinta. "Bhinta is

sad, Eileen is sad, Sally is sad. You hurt Bhinta. I know you're angry." Carlos says, "Bhinta," then "Mommy," then "home." He knocks a Kleenex box off the counter near where I am sitting. Eileen talks to Carlos in this manner a long time. She shows him how to express his anger by stamping his feet or pounding his hands on the floor. She demonstrates, tells him to do it, which he does a couple of times. He won't pound his hands on anything, though. Eileen even makes him crouch down, showing him how to pound his hands on the floor, but he shakes his head "no,' picks up and throws down a child's chair with some vehemence. Eileen says, "I think you miss Mommy. Mommy's home."

(2) Carlos' Family and Home Environment

Mrs. Soto brought Carlos to New York in October of 1983 specifically to enroll him in the infant center program at Concordia, a program she had heard about through her many inquiries in the Dominican Republic. Although a citizen of the Dominican Republic, she herself had lived in the United States before when she was still married to Carlos' father. The family had lived for part of the time in Florida where Mrs. Soto had attended college for two years. Carlos was born there and is a U.S. citizen. When divorce proceedings began, Mrs. Soto returned to the D.R. with Carlos to reside with her parents.

Mrs. Soto's parents were, in the Dominican context at least, fairly wealthy members of the elite class. They lived in a large house in a suburban setting near the capital city. Mrs. Soto's father was retired from the Dominican foreign service. Mrs. Soto had travelled widely as a child growing up in this

family, and had lived in various parts of Europe and the Middle East.

After a long struggle with pediatricians and other doctors--including one who told her Carlos might be "brain damaged"--Mrs. Soto finally extracted from a neurologist that in fact Carlos might be deaf. She then investigated schools for the deaf in the Dominican Republic, determined that Carlos should learn to speak. As in the rest of Latin America, oral programs for the deaf predominate in the Dominican Republic, although the first school for the deaf was apparently founded only in 1956. However, according to her own account, Mrs. Soto felt that "most of the kids in the school there were rural kids." They were, in her view "a different kind of people" than those Carlos was used to. She said, "They aren't really the right kind of kids for him to associate with."

She began looking for an oral program for Carlos in the U.S. There are, of course, relatively few of these left at present, after the massive change in the 1970s throughout the country's schools for the deaf to "Total Communication" programs. Mrs. Soto, however, was adamant about providing an oral program for Carlos, and she never wavered in this view, even when, after conflicts with Concordia, she began looking for other programs. When Carlos was a little over two years old, Mrs. Soto enrolled him in the infant program at Concordia.

In order to maintain Carlos in the infant program at Concordia, Mrs. Soto had of course to move to New York. She took an apartment in Washington Heights which had once belonged to an

uncle now living in New Jersey. The apartment was in the same Washington Heights neighborhood as Benito's, another of our case study children. In fact, the two families lived within five blocks of each other, though, before Benito began coming to school, they did not know each other.

But unlike Benito's father, Mrs. Soto had virtually no contacts with neighborhood social networks. This was deliberate: she told us she had no desire to mix with "these people around here." Her only ventures outside were for the purposes of getting from one point to another, such as going shopping, taking Carlos to the school bus stop, etc. Similarly, she did not mix with other Hispanic parents at the school. While she did attend such "cultural" functions as a potluck party for Hispanic parents and children during Puerto Rican "Recognition Week," she usually arrived late, generally talked only to Concordia staff, and left early.

Mrs. Soto had specific ambitions for Carlos' academic career. She wanted him to become oral in both English and Spanish. Carlos' home was well-stocked with toys, particularly of the Playskool variety--"educational" toys, including many sound-producing plastic instruments and artifacts, such as trumpets, pianos, saxophones and a typewriter. She described to us how she tried to give Carlos a "rich language environment," talking to him a lot, asking questions, using both Spanish and English together. However, her "codeswitching" was not that of the local community, some members of whom can switch in midsentence without violating the grammars of either language.

Rather she provided translations from one language to the other, with the idea that Carlos would build up a vocabulary in both languages.

We videotaped Mrs. Soto and Carlos through a one-way mirror in a room in Concordia. We asked her to "play as normally as you can with Carlos, just as you would at home." What we got was a classic piece of teacher-pupil discourse, as described by a number of classroom researchers (Mehan 1979, Sinclair and Coulthard 1975): adult elicitation, child response, adult evaluation of response:

1. M: Y de que color es ese cubito, qué [color]?
2. C: [dos]
3. M: Qué color?
4. C: (tres)
5. M: Qué co:lor es ese?
6. C: (ye::)
7. M: [M kneels directly in front of C, who is now standing in front of her next to the horse. She puts her face close to his, establishes direct eye contact, and points her finger at his face.] Oye. .que color?
8. C: (e e o o)
9. M: Qué color es ese?
10. C: (da au chu)
11. M: Qué color is ese?
12. C: (e e ov el)
13. M: Espérate, niño. [M starts to check C's aids.]

[End transcribed segment, Tape MC-C1]

[Translation:

1. M: And what color is this c=little cube, what { color }?
2. C: { dos }
3. M: What color?
4. C: (three)
5. M: What color is that?
6. C: (ye::)
7. M: Listen. .what color?
8. C: (e e o o)
9. M: What color is that?
10. C: (E e ov el)
11. M: Listen, child]

Mrs. Soto hoped Carlos would eventually go to college and become an engineer, or take up a similar profession.

(3) Interpretive Comment: Carlos

In interpreting Carlos' behavior, Eileen and Sally emphasized a psychological perspective. They explained Carlos' aggression as an "expression" of anger which at times he simply could not control. It was as if the anger would "boil up" inside him and he would then strike out at those nearest and, as it happened, most defenseless. They believed the anger was a response to the "separation problem" which, in their view--as well as in the view of most of the preschool teachers and staff--was something all very young children have to deal with when they first come to school, and which tends to involve a certain amount of anxiety. Of course not all children responded to this anxiety with anger, but there was a special aspect of Carlos' history which suggested a source for his anger. The source of

information about this aspect was a story Carlos' mother had told various school staff a few months earlier.

The story was that, during the summer of 1984, after Carlos had attended the infant center program at Concordia, and before he returned to be transferred into the preschool, she had taken him to visit her parents in the Dominican Republic. Towards the end of the summer, Mrs. Soto, knowing that she wanted Carlos to continue at Concordia, flew to New York to begin looking for an apartment. Carlos was asleep in his grandparents' home when she left. According to what her parents told her, when Carlos woke up he was very upset. He cried for a long time and could not sleep well for several nights. She was gone for about two and a half weeks.

Eileen and Sally believed that Carlos remembered this earlier separation when his mother started gradually leaving him, according to plan, for longer and longer periods of time in the classroom. They believed he had been angry with her after the original separation, and his anger now, in the classroom, was something like a reenactment for him of the original trauma. In accordance with this perspective, Jane, the preschool supervisor had referred the mother and Carlos to a "counselor."

Mrs. Soto acknowledged that perhaps Carlos was having a problem separating from her. However, in discussions with us, as well as with the teachers, she also indicated that she felt the classroom environment itself was the real source of Carlos' problem. She told us, "He never acted that way before until he came into that classroom. He never bothered other children or

hit them like that. But there's a lot of fighting going on in there, and that's what got him started." A mother of one of the girls in the classroom concurred with this view. She said that her daughter had begun fighting and hitting her brothers at home, after being in this classroom for a couple of weeks, and that she never did that before. Both mothers felt that the classroom was disorganized, that the kids weren't given enough opportunities to engage in constructive play and learning activities, that they needed more "structure."

Carlos' behavior was certainly problematic from the school's viewpoint. Not only was his aggression a possible danger to the other children, but he seemed quite willing to cross certain school-organized boundaries of event structure and interpersonal behavior. A major question, for us as analysts as well as for the teachers, was how to explain this. A great deal of attention was in fact given by several staff to this question. Ironically, there does in fact seem to be sometimes a "reason" for Carlos' aggressive and other inappropriate behavior, one that was not apparent to us at the time. For example, in the scene described above where he poured milk on Bhint's head, this was not his first aggressive act of that morning, and, moreover, each inappropriate act occurred after Eileen had corrected or reprimanded him.

It is not my purpose to claim that Carlos' behavior can be explained by seeing it as a response to Eileen's admonitions. It is in my view somewhat more complicated. Surely not all the children respond in the same way to similar direction from the

teachers, nor were Eileen's admonitions delivered with any particularly strong expression of feeling, certainly not an oppressive anger or condescending sarcasm, which some of the teachers in other classrooms could be seen using with children. More likely, Carlos had built up a pattern of response in interactions with his mother, who, we believe, kept some pressure on him to perform and to "succeed" in life and in school, as indicated by the transcript excerpted earlier. Also, the family was relatively isolated. Carlos had, at the time, no other children to play with in the neighborhood, as Mrs. Soto did not want him playing with "those kids."

In fact, Eileen agreed that these factors may also have had an influence on Carlos' behavior when I suggested them to her. What is interesting, though, is that this view was never expressed in more official discussions, such as two IEP conferences with Mrs. Soto. She in fact tried to argue that the classroom structure--its "disorganization," the rough play of the three Black boys, the "lack" of organized play and learning activities--was contributing to Carlos' anxieties. She refused to sign the IEP because of the way the teacher had described Carlos on the page "Controlling One's Own Behavior":

> Carlos often acts aggressive toward other children and it is difficult to determine the reason for his striking the child. He is physically aggressive towards others when angry and often takes his anger out on inappropriate targets.

Afterwards, Mrs. Soto told us she was very angry. She felt she had done everything they had asked, including going to see the "counselor" on a weekly basis with Carlos, so he could "learn to

deal with his anger," as school staff put it. Yet, now they would not listen to her, they "pretended" they did not know why Carlos was "aggressive," there were other kids in the classroom who were more aggressive than he, Carlos had not been aggressive before entering that classroom (which we believe was in fact not quite true), and now the teachers who had once been so friendly treated her in a "cold, businesslike" manner.

Not only did the pressure Mrs. Soto put on Carlos to learn not become a factor in these formal IEP conferences. Even farther removed from the discourse was any supposition that it was the combination or interaction of these two forces--schooling at school and schooling at home. We suggest this as an alternative interpretation.

Discussion

The view I have just offered suggests that the contexts for interpreting Carlos' behavior might be taken to include both classroom and home, as two closely related worlds of discourse which provide the materials out of which he and those around him make his world, and shape him as a being with a particular set of relationships which are defined or "explained" in specific ways. Perhaps in this case there is too much similarity between the minority "subculture" of the home and that of the school. Perhaps Carlos is looking for a refuge? We do not know. However, Carlos' behavior can be analyzed as a piece of a "larger" social structure. At a minimum, this would include the class relations adhered to by Mrs. Soto, resulting in a certain isolation of herself and Carlos within a very active community.

This analysis would also encompass the school's ties to certain "mainstream" assumptions about "structure" and "appropriate" behavior, as well as about what children need to be learning in preschool--particularly that they are to be prepared for the future grades, including learning certain models of "appropriate" social behavior as well as acquiring certain "skills," e.g., math, reading and writing.

What would we hope to find if we interpret the three children's behavior as their individual contributions to a Bakhtinian "struggle of voices" for "hegemony among various available verbal and ideological points of view, approaches, directions and values" (cited above)? And where would we look to discern the nature of that struggle?

To answer the first question: we hope to be able to weave together the social actions of participants and their socio-ideological environment, by seeing one as responding to the other, back and forth, within the given constraints of the social world. "Explanation" would consist in explicating, "thematizing" in Heidegger's terms (1962), these processes of "structuration" (Giddens, cited above). Human agency would be both assumed and problematized at the same time. That is, we assume humans make choices ongoingly as they produce their social world, and we acknowledge that the range or degree of choice is constrained by that social world at the same time. An "empirical" investigation consists of examining those choices and constraints together.

Where we must look is at the key structural, or "structuring," relations of the social world. But not "key" in

the sense of consistently repeated patterns of event, but rather "key" in the Bakhtinian sense of revealing the contradictions which "drive" the social system--i.e., to which actors actions may be tied as responses.

All three classrooms were highly organized environments. The very low student-teacher ratio (8:2) helps to ensure that, despite, or in a sense because of, the children's disability. Teachers shared similar goals, and similar assumptions about the purpose of schooling and the nature of the trajectory students were supposed to follow throughout their school careers, with fairly definite endpoints. Of course, each classroom was at a different stage in achieving those goals. These goals included getting kids to accept the peculiarities of an oral program, as well as the discipline of schooling. In fact, an oral program requires certain specific kinds of discipline that mainstream, and even Total Communication, programs may not involve (comparative research is lacking in this area, however). The goals also included inculcating, in fact using as a foundation for all classroom activities, certain values, such as individual responsibility, "task orientation," work, and the competitive struggle to "excel." This last goal was of course not always made explicit. However, the many examples of competitive struggle which could be observed any day in any classroom, convinces us it was in fact an integral part of the curriculum.

The sociocultural world of the school involved adherence to two mutually-contradictory ways of social being. On the one hand, a cooperative, group-oriented model of social relations was

embedded in both an explicit ideology and the organization of classroom activities. Teachers tried to work with the children and to devise activities they could do together. On the other hand, a competitive, individually-oriented ideology and social system were also powerful organizing forces in classrooms. Many "group" activities could be viewed as individuals coexisting in the same setting, such as sitting together around a table, but working working separately on identical projects. In such activities concepts of individual ownership and comparative evaluation were simply part of the taken-for-granted way of doing things. The snack scene in Carlos' room described above is one example. The turn-taking, involving possession of a valued space--i.e., the "bathroom"--in Ana's classroom is another. Other examples abound in our field notes and tape recordings, as well as in the brochures the school publishes for public consumption, and the very organization of the IEP process itself, which treats each family as an individual unit. This contradiction has of course been seen as fundamental to U.S. society itself, as well as its public institutions, from Tocqueville to C. Wright Mills (for discussions relating this phenomenon to education see Tyack, Lowe and Hansot 1984; Aronowitz and Giroux 1985).

Behind this view are certain assumptions about deafness as a disability, assumptions which are based partly on established fact--such as the low reading scores of deaf adults (Schein and Delk 1974), partly on personal experience of professionals with the deaf, and partly on the fact that these facts and experiences

are interpreted within the context of a particular kind of institution. It is certainly very difficult to teach these skills to deaf children, and current pedagogical methods require, generally, considerable compliance to teacher direction on the part of the children. Those children who cannot learn such compliance are highly likely to fall behind, and even to be tracked out of "regular" programming into programs for the disturbed or learning disabled. However, it is worth noting that in the context of the contradictions discussed above, the disability of deafness becomes a handicap. To the extent that the disability interferes with, or makes more difficult, the accomplishment of the "ordinary business of (mainstream) schooling," it is accorded special treatment, from the complex governance of the intake process to the specific organization of school and classroom.

To understand each child's response to this environment, with its highly rationalized but contradictory intentions, we would first look at some of the more prominent features of the parents' relation to (a) the child, and (b) their social environment. Certainly one candidate for prominence is the very different relationship each family had to the labor market.

Ana's father was incorporated into a large, low-skill service sector job market in the expanding hotel industry, with a unionized workforce. Benito's father had a very peripheral relationship to the labor market--in fact having no strong interest in that kind of "secure" labor. And he was much more

integrated into both neighborhood and familial networks than Mr. Colon.

Mrs. Soto had a peripheral relation to the labor market too, but of a quite different peripherality than Mr. Escobar's. She identified strongly with the elite Dominican class, and would not willing associate with Dominicans in her own New York neighborhood, or indeed with most of the Hispanic parents at the school, most of whom were much more like the Escobars than like Mrs. Soto. Mrs. Soto in fact wanted to work but was not permitted by her visa. Her sincerity in this desire was demonstrated by her asking us to write a letter to the Immigration and Naturalization Service to the effect that she needed a resident visa because of Carlos' enrollment at Concordia. She refused to work as an illegal alien, a common ploy in the Dominican community in New York.

In crude class terms, we might see the Escobars as members of an underclass, the Colons as working class aspiring to a vaguely-perceived middleclass status, and Mrs. Escobar as an elite, though living in an underclass community.

When we turn to each child's behavior, we can easily see their responses to the classroom as molded by their family and home environment. Benito's response to the competition in the classroom is to maintain his separateness from the teacher, and to "handle things himself," as his teacher so astutely observed. He is independent, autonomous, and rather clever. He quickly discerned the difference between the official, or what Bakhtin would call the "authoritative," discourse in the classroom and

the unofficial, peer-controlled discourse, which is often covert. For example, one day he glanced at the teacher to see if she was looking (she wasn't), then looked at me while giving the finger to one of his peers who had just pushed him. I nodded and he nodded back, then repeated the gesture toward the other child, checking out the teacher as he did so.

Ana, on the other hand, aligns herself with the teacher and participates in the competition endemic to the school's culture--in this case it was a competition to be more "knowledgeable," to possess, as it were, a piece of authoritative discourse. Is it an accident that her mother encourages this respect for the authority of the teacher, or that this family aspires to move up? It seems inadequate, by the way, to say that such "respect" is a "characteristic" or "trait" of Hispanic culture. In fact, it was not shared by many of our other parents. That is, while they treated the teachers with the politeness--respeto--which was their due, they often in private expressed strong criticism of them. The kind of "respect" Mrs. Colon fostered was at least as much of a class aspiration as a "tradition."

But it is also important, I believe, that Ana is a girl. The options Benito has are not open to her, neither at home nor at school. She is not allowed to wander around outside, even though there are fenced-off play areas in her housing project, without adult supervision. She might, like Carlos, have rebelled against the pressure to "improve" academically. Both Mrs. Soto and Mrs. Colon pushed their children, shared school goals (as they interpreted them), and had aspirations about their deaf

child's future beyond the hope of Benito's parents that he would always be buena gente. Insofar as these aspirations are built into the social worlds of school and home, Carlos' and Ana's behavior can be understood as their responses to those aspirations. Differences between them are likely to be due both to the particular social organization and position of their families, and to gender differences.

Benito's case is quite different: it is only at school that he has those aspirations to cope with. They are not shared by his family, though they want him to "get along" at school, do what the teacher tells him, and make friends with his peers. In fact, Concordia staff sometimes noted that the "problem" with Benito--he began getting into fights with other children, it was reported--was that he lacked the proper "supportive" home environment that would enable him to succeed in school, bright as he undoubtedly was.

Conclusion

The implications of our suggested approach cannot be adequately discussed here (v. Bennett 1987a, 1987b for further discussion), but some potential payoffs may be briefly mentioned. The most obvious, and perhaps one of the more important, is that we can now discard the "cultural and communicative differences" model of explaining the "failure" or "success" of minority children in school. "Failure" in this view is of course due to the inability and or unwillingness of schools to accommodate to minority ways. or, what comes to the same thing, the

inability/unwillingness of the child (and family) to accommodate to the classroom.

There are three problems in particular with this explanation. One is that you cannot know to what extent the failure to communicate is due to inability and to what extent unwillingness. You are forced by the model to search for "hidden causes" in linguistic and communicative behaviors that are in the background of participants' awareness. Second, the differences model leaves out of account the history of the communities in question and their position with respect to the institutions of U.S. society. It becomes impossible, then, to deal with questions of agency. Are people moved around like pawns, colliding unintentionally as it were, by history and culture, or do they in fact make choices? Have they choices? One can never hope to answer such questions by comparing cultural and communicative patterns to see to what extent they "match."

The question of how much of a match, and what must match and what need not, is another knotty problem which I will not attempt to deal with here. I rather want to conclude by pointing to a final concern: the definition of "successful" and "unsuccessful" communication in the sociolinguistics of discourse model is usually given from the point of view of the institutions in question: does the applicant get through the "gate" (Erickson and Schultz 1981)? To take this view is, I believe, to abrogate the responsibilities of the social scientist to remain as impartial as possible while yet developing for others' use a critical perspective on social realities. Consider the implications of

this view as compared to those of the view endorsed in this paper. The microethnographer typically aims at reform of the system, rather than at structural change (examples abound in Heath 1983, Michaels 1981, Gilmore 1983, Gumperz 1982a,b). One must ask whether this is not to have decided prior to the research itself what its outcome must be. It is not, of course, that this may not be a legitimate goal of social science. The problem is that this view itself is problematic for the oppressed groups whose lot these researchers hope to improve, particularly if it is the case that the structure of the social system itself is what keeps them down. The question of reform vs. structural change has not been adequately dealt with in this literature.

Microethnographers and sociolinguists can justly claim that they have at least worked out actual reforms based on their research perspective (v. in particular Heath 1983, Gumperz 1982a, 1982b). The approach I have attempted to delineate here can make no such claim, since it has not had the opportunity to be implemented in practice. However, this approach seems to me at least amenable to considering the alternatives between reform and structural change and in relating those alternatives to the actual social experience of the people involved. Clearly, the kinds of processes and relationships we have described here are only partially amenable to reform within the system, since one of the most important factors seems to be the power relations that apply in any given context. Reform and structural change can in fact be distinguished on the basis of how they deal with power relations, with the former approach aiming to work within

existing power relations, and, and the latter hoping to alter them. How the goal of using research to alter power relations--clearly a very difficult problem, and not a merely academic one--must remain the subject of further investigation.

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"Perspectives On Identity: Hispanic Deaf Children Go To School"

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	Intake Date	Age Child Intake	Birth Place Father	Birth Place Mother	Birth Place Child	Marital Status	Arrival U.S. Father	Arrival U.S. Mother	Arrival U.S. Child
Ana Colon	9-18-84	6 Yrs. 2 Mos.	New York	Puerto Rico	Puerto Rico	Married	1980	1980	-----
Benito Escobar	10-9-84	3 Yrs. 10 Mos.	Domin. Rep.	Domin. Rep.	U.S.A.	Married	1967	1978	-----
Carlos Soto	11-13-84	3 Yrs. 0 Mos.	Iraq	Domin. Rep.	New York	Divorced	1975	1980	Oct. 1983 (From Domin. Rep.)
Elena Hirst	5-13-83	2 Yrs. 10 Mos.	Monte-video, Uruguay	Uruguay	Uruguay (Adop.)	Married	Feb. 1983	Feb. 1983*	Feb. 1983
Flor Valles	2-26-85	5 Yrs. 0 Mos.	Puerto Rico	New York	New York	Single	1961	-----	-----
Graciela Ortega	1-17-85	2 Yrs. 9 Mos.	Ecuador	El Salvador	New York	Single	1963	1975	-----
Hector Hernandez	7-29-85	3 Yrs. 1 Mo.	Ecuador	Ecuador	New York	Married	1969	1974	-----
Juan Castro	2-20-86	5 Yrs. 1 Mo.	Guayama, Puerto Rico (Deaf)	Santurce, Puerto Rico	San Jan, Puerto Rico	Single	1978	1978	Nov. 1984

*Elena's mother grew up in New York City, returning to Uruguay as a young adult.

Figure 1: Demographic Data on Case Study Families: Concordia

	Father Occupation	Mother Occupation	Father Ed. Level	Mother Ed. Level	Language Used At Home	Adults Living in Home	Birth Dates of Siblings	Social Services*				Food Stamps
								W	Med	SSI	Unempl	
Ana Colon	Hotel Worker	Homemaker	H.S. Diploma	4 Yrs. College	Spanish English	Father Mother	F.9/29/81		x	x		
Benito Escobar	None	Homemaker	11th Grade	10th Grade	Spanish English	Father Mother	F.10/13/76 F.2/5/83	x	x	x		x
Carlos Soto	Engineer	Homemaker	3 Yrs. College	1 Yr. College	Spanish	Mother	None		x	x		
Elena Hirst	Business-man	Homemaker	4 Yrs. College	High School Diploma	Spanish English	Father Mother Grand-mother Hsekpr	M.1/24/79 M.1984					
Flor Valles	None	Homemaker	12th Grade	8th Grade	Spanish English	Mother	M.8/9/77 (Deaf)	x	x	x		
Graciela Ortega	None	Homemaker	H.S. Diploma	9th Grade	Spanish	Mother Father	None	x	x	x		x
Hector Hernandez	Cook	Homemaker	4th Grade	6th Grade	Spanish	Mother Father	F.3/24/74 M.3/22/76 F.7/29/80 M.11/7/83 M.3/13/85	x	x	x		x
Juan Castro	Carpenter	Homemaker	School F/T Deaf		Span/Eng ASL	Mother	None		x	x		

*W: Welfare Med: Medicaid SSI: Supplemental Security Income

Figure 2: Occupational and Related Data on Case Study Families: Concordia

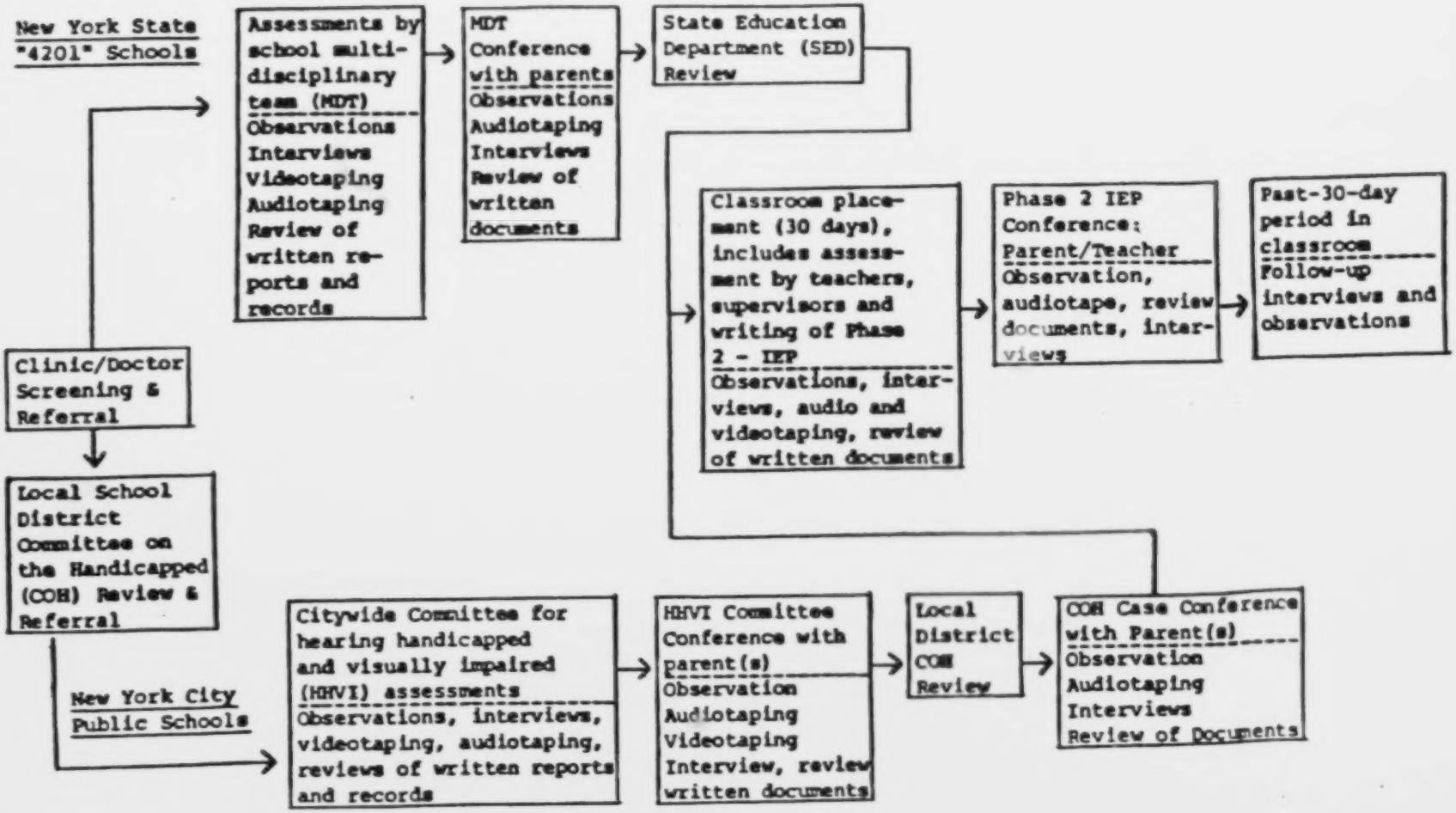
New York State "4201" Schools
Assessments by school multi-disciplinary team (MDT)
Observations
Interviews
Videotaping
Audiotaping
Review of written reports and records
MDT Conference with parents
Observations
Audiotaping
Interviews
Review of written documents
State Education Department (SED) Review
Classroom placement (30 days), includes assessment by teachers, supervisors and writing of Phase 2 - IEP
Observations, interviews, audio and videotaping, review of written documents
Phase 2 IEP Conference: Parent/Teacher
Observation, audiotape, review documents, interviews
Past-30-day period in classroom
Follow-up interviews and observations
Clinic/Doctor Screening & Referral
Local School District Committee on the Handicapped (COH) Review & Referral
New York City Public Schools
Citywide Committee for hearing handicapped and visually impaired (HHVI) assessments
Observations, interviews, videotaping, audiotaping, reviews of written reports and records
HHVI Committee Conference with parent(s)
Observation
Audiotaping
Videotaping
Interview, review written documents
Local District COH Review
COH Case Conference with Parent(s)
Observation
Audiotaping
Interviews
Review of Documents

Figure 3: Intake process for private state supported ("4201") and New York City Public Schools, and data-collection methods used at each stage

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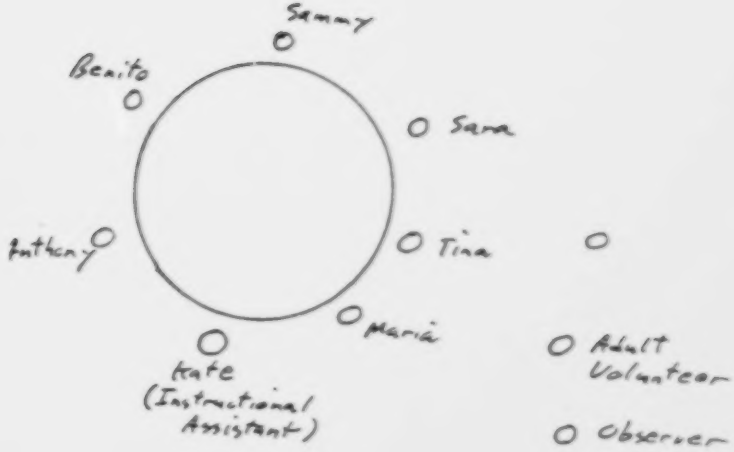

Figure 4: Participant Positions in the 4-yr. Old Class (Benito)

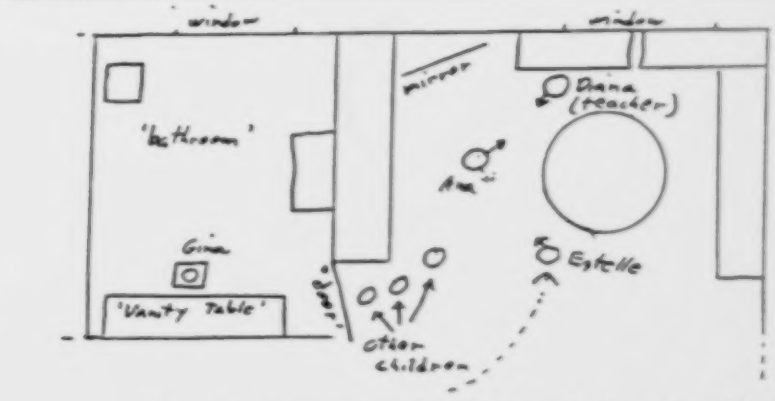

Figure 5: Participant Positions in Kindergarten Class (Ana)

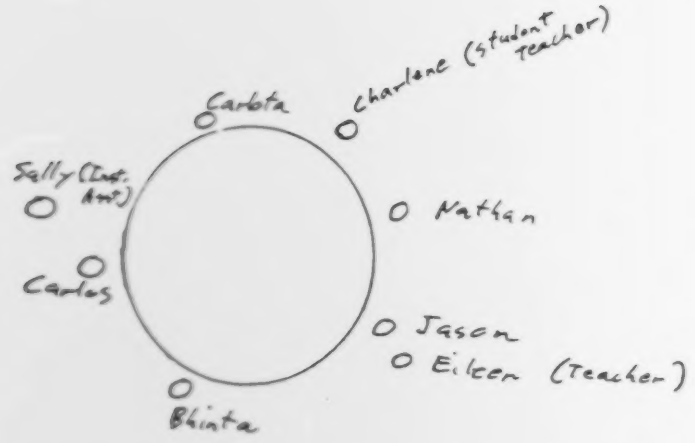

Figure 6: Participant Positions in the 3-yr. Old Class (Carlos)